

Message Text

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DEPARTMENT PASS USIA

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TAGS: SHUM, CI

SUBJECT: EMBASSY COMMEMORATES HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

REF: SANTIAGO 9977 (USIAC)

1. THE EMBASSY ORGANIZED A HUMAN RIGHTS ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT THE SANTIAGO BINATIONAL CENTER DECEMBER 9 TO COMMEMORATE HUMAN RIGHTS DAY. APPARENTLY IT WAS THE ONLY SUCH COMMEMORATIVE EVENT HELD. APPROXIMATELY 35 PERSONS ATTENDED. "LA TERCERA," THE SANTIAGO NEWSPAPER WITH THE LARGEST CIRCULATION, CARRIED A LENGTHY STORY THE FOLLOWING DAY.

2. PARTICIPANTS IN THE ROUND TABLE WERE JORGE IVAN HUBNER GALLO, DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY, AND AUTHOR OF A RECENT BOOK ON HUMAN RIGHTS; ALEJANDRO MAGNET, MEMBER OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY, FREI'S AMBASSADOR TO THE OAS, AND CURRENTLY A TV COMMENTATOR AND COLUMNIST; AND POLITICAL COUNSELOR, ROBERT E. SERVICE. THE MODERATOR WAS BNC DIRECTOR DONALD BESOM. HUBNER TRACED THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS GUARANTEES IN WESTERN CIVILIZATION. MAGNET ANALYZED THE DEVELOPMENT AND STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS MACHINERY WITHIN THE INTERAMERICAN SYSTEM. SERVICE DREW UPON MATERIAL IN

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THE IPS WIRELESS RELEASE "A CITY ON A HILL." THE THREE PRESENTATIONS WERE FOLLOWED BY A 20 MINUTE DISCUSSION AMONG THE PANELISTS AND THE MODERATOR. THE MOST INTERESTING POINT RAISED (BY MAGNET) WAS THE ISSUE OF HOW HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT CAN BE RECONCILED WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-INTERVENTION. THERE WAS AGREEMENT AMONG THE PANELISTS THAT THE TWO WERE NOT NECESSARILY OR DRAMATICALLY IN CONFLICT. THE ROUND TABLE WAS NOT OPENED

TO QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR.

3. SHORTLY BEFORE THE ROUND TABLE WAS TO BEGIN BNC DIRECTOR BESOM RECEIVED A PHONE CALL FROM INTERIOR MINISTRY UNDER SECRETARY ENRIQUE MONTERO. MONTERO NOTED THE SENSITIVITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF THE DECEMBER 7 UN VOTE ON THE CHILE RESOLUTION AND THE DECEMBER 8 USG PRESS RELEASE EXPLAINING OUR VOTE (THE TEXT OF WHICH HAD APPEARED IN "EL MERCURIO" THAT MORNING). HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEMS AND REFERRED TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT "LEFTISTS" MIGHT TRY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION TO CAUSE A DISTURBANCE.

4. THERE WERE, IN FACT, NO PROBLEMS. THE EMBASSY'S COMMEMORATION WAS A QUIET BUT DULY NOTED SUCCESS.
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